

A  
LETTER

From the  
COUNCEL of OFFICERS

At WHITE-HALL,

TO  
COLONEL LILBURNE

Commander in Chief of the Forces in

SCOTLAND,

And OFFICERS under his command, Concerning  
the late Transactions in Dissolution of the

PARLIAMENT:

Together with the RETURN from the  
COUNCEL of OFFICERS,

Met at Dalkeith, Tuesday May 17. 1653. thereunto.



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Printed at Leith, according to Order,  
Anno Dom. 1653.

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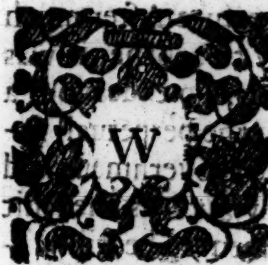
Met at Whitehall, Wednesday May 17. 1688. thereunto.

Printed

Printed at Leeds, according to Order  
of the House of Commons. 1688.



*Honorable, and our dear Christian Friends,*



When we consider the many and wonderfull things which the Lord hath of late years brought to pass in these three Nations, in the subduing of great Armies, and casting down all the strong holds of the Enemy; in pouring contempt upon Princes and great men, that have not kist, but opposed the Lord Jesus, in the Work he hath been, and is still carrying on in the World, and in taking down and altering forms of Government that have been in these Nations, both Civill and Ecclesiastick: We cannot but cry out, *Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints: Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name? for thy judgments are made manifest.*

As you were witnesses of, and active in some of those great changes that have formerly been made, so we doubt not but you have, (though at a distance) felt the late earth-quake, and have heard of the sudden dissolution of the Parliament; which yet being so great a Revolution, we thought it our duty to send you this Letter, to the end we might therein let you know the frame of our hearts, and how desirous we are, that you and we may in the midst of the great dispensations of God, still continue stedfast in one spirit; that so, if it be the will of the Lord, we may be further instrumentall in bringing about those things which may be to the glory of God, the good of his People, and the peace and welfare of the Commonwealth.

It would require more time then we have now to spare, to give you a particular and full accompt of all the grounds and reasons upon which this great Action was undertaken; and therefore therein we shall refer you to the Declaration of the Lord Generall, and his Councell of Officers, of the 22 of April last, and to your own Observations concerning the ill management of Affairs by the late Parliament. Onely we shall say, that this last dangerous remedy of a dissolution, was not used, till all other wayes had been by us assayed, and by them rejected. And therefore after four years expectation (since



the change of the Government, finding no performance of those things that tend to the settlement of the Commonwealth in peace and righteousness, and being abundantly satisfied upon long experience, that the Parliament as it was constituted, were so far from being Instruments in protecting the Work of the Lord, that this whole Cause was in great danger to perish under their hands, for which there hath been so vast an expence of Blood and Treasure. After much seeking the face of God, and taking Councell one with another, it was generally apprehended, that the only way left us, was, To endeavour a speedy change in the *Supream Authority*, that so the perpetuall sitting of the Parliament might be prevented, and the Government laid upon the shoulders of such men, as might hopefully give us the fruit of all our labour and blood, and encourage good men to be still willing to hazard their lives against the common Enemy, which as things lately stood, many had little heart to do. And it was in our hearts to seek this thing in such a way, that the Parliament might have had the honor of it; but it pleased not the Lord to give them an heart to incline to the motions made in order thereunto, by the General, in the name of himself and his Officers, many of which were present; but rather to endeavor a hasty and inconsiderate passing of an Act for a new Representative, the danger whereof was very evident, and was by the General, at a meeting with many of the Members of Parliament, and Officers of the Army, abundantly demonstrated to them; which yet the next day was so earnestly and precipitantly persisted in, that it was found necessary to put them to a sudden Dissolution; which also we hope the Lord will make the *Medium* to future good; of which there is the more expectation, because it hath pleased God, who hath the hearts of all men in his own hand, so to order the spirits of men, that not only the Army and Fleet do most unanimously concur and agree, but also the Generality of all sorts of People do rejoyce therein, insomuch that there is not the appearance of the least disturbance. And it is the continual and fervent prayers of all the People of God, that this great Change may have the extraordinary blessing of God upon it.

By this inclosed Declaration, you will perceive what Provision is made for the present management of Affairs; till persons of approved fidelity and honesty may be called, to take upon them the *Supream Authority* of this Common-wealth; which being done, we may have cause to hope, the Lord will make them a future blessing to us.

Dear

Dear Friends, We are perswaded this is the Lords own Work, and ought to be marvelous in our eyes. The Lord hath once and again pul'd down the Mighty from their seats, and we trust, it is that Himself may reign; and therefore let the Earth rejoyce, and these our Islands be glad thereof; for though Clouds and Darknes are round about Him, yet Righteousness and Judgment are the habitation of His Throne. The Lord is terrible in His Doings, therefore the guilty world will tremble: but *Sion* shall hear and be glad, and the Daughters of *Judah* shall rejoyce, because of His judgments. Let us therefore (dear Brethren) serve the Lord with fear; and rejoyce with trembling; for we are not without hope that our Lord Jesus Christ who is the King of Saints, will henceforth shew Himself to be the King of Nations also.

We do not doubt, but the Lord will make your hearts as ours in this great business, and that as the Lord hath wonderfully stirred up the heart of his Excellency the Lord General, to put himself upon God, in this great Undertaking, for the Interest of Jesus Christ and His People; so we shall adhere to Him, and one to another therein. We know your sincere love to Christ and His People is such, that we shall use no arguments unto you, but only mind you, That when the Lord called our Brethren to the service of *Ireland*, in the year 1649. at a solemn Meeting of the Officers designed for *Ireland*, with those that remained here, (at which Meeting many of your selves were present) after that we had with many prayers and tears, recommended one another into the bosom of Christ; we did also in the presence of each other, and before the Lord, solemnly submit our selves, and all our affairs to be wholly at his dispose, resolving through the influence of His Spirit, in all our Publick Undertakings, not to seek our selves, but the advancement of the Affairs and Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this Spirit, and with these Resolutions, we then parted to our several Employments, and the Lord hath blessed us hitherto; and lo, we are yet alive, though thousands of our dear Friends who engaged with us, are dead. The Lord grant we may with our Lives be instrumental to carry on and preserve that Cause and Interest which was by them valued above their Lives, and whose Bloud crieth loud to us to persevere therein unto the end.

Let us therefore, we beseech you, provoke both you and our selves, not to consult with carnal reason in these great Mutations, but let us labour by faith to see the Lord carry on His own Work, and to manifest

nifest our selves, whom God hath called and chosen to these stations, wherein we stand, to be also faithful in doing the Work unto which He shall appoint us.

Dear Brethren, The Work hath hitherto been to break and to pull down, which every one almost seemeth to be good at; but it's now the expectation of good men, that building and establishing work shall follow, for which yet there are not, in our view, many fit, and therefore it will be your duty and ours to pray without ceasing, that those whom God shall call to the Government, may be men full of the holy Ghost, and of power, and may have His continual presence in the carrying on of so great a Work, on the issue whereof, depends (as we are perswaded) the Interest of the Saints throughout the whole world.

Now the Lord keep our hearts close to Himself, that so, however things go about, we may be found walking as becometh the Gospel of Christ, in faith towards God, in love one towards another, and in peace and righteousness towards all men: Which that we may do, let us earnestly beg your continual and fervent Prayers, even as we desire to make mention of you as often as we encompass the Throne of Grace, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we are,

*White-hall, May 3. 1653.*

*Your most affectionate Friends  
and Brethren.*

*For the honorable Colonel Lilburne, Commander in chief  
of the Forces in Scotland, to be communicated to our  
dear Friends, the Officers in his Command.*

*Right Honourable and truly beloved Christian Friends,*



Our Letter of May 3. (expressing your zeal for the advancement of the Interest of Christ and His People in the World, and particularly in these Nations; as also your good affection unto us, as Fellow-Members with you) we have received, and having read and considered it, do bless the Lord for his good Hand of Providence, leading you, to and through your former and latter great Undertakings; and for those breathings of his holy Spirit upon your hearts, inflaming your desires of improving what is already done, to a further advantage for the setting up of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; and consequently of holiness, righteousness and Peace. And although the Declaration of his Excellency and his Council of Officers (coming to our hands before yours) had acquainted us with the dissolution of the late Parliament,  
and



and the just and weighty grounds from whence it arose; whereby we were not onely satisfied in our understandings, but so dilated in our affections, that we could not chuse but bear speedy witnesse unto that Act of yours, which so rejoyreth the hearts of the Godly, and openeth so wide a door of hope to the People in generall, to reap in short time, the desireable fruits of our promises, and their expectations, hath caused us to anticipate, and give an answer (which we doubt not but by this time is come unto you) to so much of your Letter before we received it; by which it may be seen that there is no distance, but onely of place betwixt us: Yet do we think it our duty, having such an occasion of Writing, to endeavour still to keep these things warm both upon your spirits and our own, by remembering as what we have received from the Lord, so what returns he expecteth from us.

*He hath levelled the Mountains and the Hills, cut down the Cedars of Lebanon, and the Oaks of Bashan; He hath shewen himself fearfull in praises, and doing Wonders in the midst of the Earth, even in our sight:* When we remember the *Worm-wood* and the *gall*, the bitter bondage we were in not many years since, under the Tyranny of Regall and Episcopall Powers, and how deeply they were rooted by continuance in the Nation, how strongly fenced by pretence both of Law and Gospel; besides their numerous Armies, and the multitude of their strong holds; And then, look upon our present Freedome wrought out of their destruction by Instruments, not onely contemned by them, but such as the then builders would have laid aside as unfit for their end and purpose: May we not in an extasie of joy and wonder cry out, What hath God wrought! It is he alone that hath delivered us out of all our troubles and fears, and brought them low from time to time that rose up against us, and would have swallowed us up quick when they were wrathfully displeased at us: But behold they are fallen down flat, whilst we are risen and stand upright, for the effecting of which, the Lord hath not been sparing in demonstration of his power in many miraculous Victories. So that we must needs acknowledge, that the Lord hath wrought all our Works for us; He it is that at this time hath not onely enlarged the hearts, and opened the mouths of those that fear the Lord, to blasse his Name on your behalf, and to give testimony to your Proceedings; but hath convinced the hearts, or stopped the mouths of all others, that there is not so much as the noise of a dog barking, or a serpent hissing in the way of your great and Publick Affairs.

And

And now dear and Worthy Friends, what is it that the Lord doth require at our hands, but that as he hath done all for us; so we should act all for him, that in the strength of former experiences, confirming to our sight the truth of his promises, we should in our stations be carrying on the Lords design of establishing the Mountain of his house upon the top of the Mountains. Indeed, when according to Gods Decree and Oath, the Lord Jesus shall lift up his Scepter over the Nations, and set up his banner of holiness in the hearts and lives of those that profess his Name, then may we expect that his habitation shall be righteousness, and the effect of that Righteousness Peace and Assurance for ever. We confesse that this Work is spiritual, and so not to be accomplished by humane power and might, policy or prudence, but by the Spirit of the Lord: and yet is Truth to spring out of the earth; the Lord will so far own his faithfull servants (though but few) that he will lay the foundation of this glorious structure, by the Operation of his Spirit in their hearts. And this Work we cannot but believe, shall be carried on in a rationall and visible way, to the destruction of *Babylon*, and building up the wals of *Zion*. And truly, we hope, the Lord hath reserved you to this season, to give you the honor and comfort (after all your hard travels of removing obstructions out of the way) of chusing fit Instruments and materials for that Work; and this we are the more confident of, because we find him at this time stirring up in our Noble Generall and your selves an excellent Spirit of faith, zeal, humility, and self-deniall.

Dear Brethren, It is in our hearts to live and dye with you, and through the strength of the Almighty, to perform all our vows, which we rejoyce you have stil so fresh in your remembrance. You are manifested to our hearts by your Actions and Declarations, & our long knowledge of you, mainly to seek the things of Jesus Christ, & the good of the Nation. And indeed what else can you find in these transactions (laying aside the peace and comfort of your own hearts) but a heavy burden of businesse for the present upon your shoulders, much aggravated, we doubt, by the earnestness of some, who though they believe, yet peradventure make hast, and importune you rexpediton, in which we trust you will endeavour with all conveniency to answer their desires: Truly we sympathize with you in this labour of love to our poor Nation, and humbly and heartily beseech the Lord to establish, strengthen and encourage you by his constant Spirit in the production of those blessed fruits of your conceptions & Resolutions.

Now, the Lord of heaven lead you by the right hand, inable you as you have begun to walk in a direct path, to that glorious end of advancing the name of Jesus Christ, & the weal of these Nations under his protection and Government, & that having put your hand to the Plough, you may neither look back, nor leave off, til the Land be fruitful in good works, and that every one may sit under his own Vine, and under his own Fig. tree, blessing the Lord for those gracious Dispensations, wherein he made you instrumentall of. This is the constant and earnest Prayer of,

*Dalkesh, May 17. 1653.*

*Your truly affectionate Friends and Brethren.*

*For the Right Honorable Major-General Lambert, to be communicated  
to our dear and Christian Friends of the Army in England.*